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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9904
INFO RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 4648
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RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6917
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0001
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 6550
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN 8540
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 2055
RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KYIV 1375
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 0732
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2020
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SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PA ON BID FOR WTO OBSERVER STATUS

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1.(SBU) Charge had a conversation this morning with PA Ambassador Khraishi on the PA's bid for observer status in the WTO. Charge emphasized that the United States continues to have questions regarding the PA's request for observer status in the WTO General Council (GC) but that we are willing to sit down with them and discuss this issue and the criteria for WTO membership, including possible technical assistance, in detail. He also reiterated that the United States would support observer status for the PA at the upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference and reminded Khraishi that for this to be possible the PA would have to submit a formal request for it by Thursday. Finally, Charge emphasized that the PA needed to engage directly with Israel on these issues.

12. (SBU) Khraishi said that his authorities have decided to request observer status at the MC. However, unlike the last time, they don't want this to be ad hoc observer status which provides no security as to future MCs. They see this as a second class status. With respect to the November GC, he said that the PA would like to have the issue on the agenda for a non-confrontational discussion with no expectation of a decision. He thought that he could convince his allies to follow this low key path.

13. (SBU) Charge noted that the PA's desire for their observer status at the MC not to be ad hoc was a new element and that he would have to consult with his authorities. On the November GC, he expressed concern that insisting that GC observership be placed on the agenda would stand in the way of gaining the necessary consensus on MC observer status. Khraishi seemed to take the point but said that he would have to consult with others.

14. (SBU) Comment - Accepting the PA's request for MC observer status at the MC on a non-"ad hoc" basis would be different from what we did at the last MC, but it would not actually make observer status at the next MC automatic. The standard practice for non-ad hoc observers is to grant them observer status at future MCs but that still have to be confirmed by the GC before each MC, as we just did in October.

SHARK